

GRAHAM has been on the Finance Committee since 1995. In the 1990s, Senator GRAHAM was also a bipartisan bridge builder on tax and trade issues. Senator GRAHAM faithfully attended to Florida's interests during his service on the committee.

I thank also Senator FRIST for backing me all the way on this bill. He took months to get it to the Senate floor. At times many of our Republican caucus questioned whether it was worth the price of unrelated controversial amendments that were thrown our way. Our leader stayed the course. I appreciate that very much.

I would like to thank my staff on the Senate Finance Committee as well: Kolan Davis, our staff director; Mark Prater, chief tax counsel, and the other tax counsels—Ed McClellan, Elizabeth Paris, Dean Zerbe, Christy Mistr, and John O'Neill, as well as John's predecessor, Diann Howland. These individuals, along with Adam Freed, the staff assistant for the tax team, have been the workhorses for the committee—keeping the lights burning long into the night to make this bill possible.

Finally, thanks go to the hard-working interns and law clerks. I refer to Casey August, Grant Menke, and Peter Jordan. Grant took the summer off to call balls and strikes as an umpire in the New York-Penn league. Grant helped us with this bill in the spring and returned in time for the conference.

Let me extend my thanks also to George Yin and the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation for providing guidance in this effort. I want to particularly point out the good work of Ray Beeman, David Noren, and Gray Fontenot. The Finance Committee tax staff refers to this trio of specialists as the "three amigos." The three amigos helped us find a lot of gold out there in corporate loophole land. Brian Meighan recently left the three amigos for the private sector.

I would like to thank the leadership staff for all their assistance. From Senator FRIST's staff, I thank Lee Rawls, Eric Ueland, Ronit Kumar, and Libby Jarvis. I also thank our Senate leadership team and their staffs, especially our able whip, Senator MCCONNELL.

Finally my thanks to go Jim Fransen, Mark Mathiesen, Mark McGunable and their capable staff at legislative counsel for taking on our ideas and drafting them into statutory language. These talented lawyers are the true wizards of the legislative process. They handle enormous pressure with professionalism and amazing dexterity.

I invite everybody to relax a bit today. After the vote tonight, everyone should go home and get a good night's sleep. As for me, now we are getting ready to wrap up. I am looking forward to going home to Iowa. It is harvest-time in the fields. I have some work to do on the farm. We also have a bit of an election coming up. God willing, the good folks of Iowa will send me back

here to continue to do the people's business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the conference report to accompany H.R. 4520.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. The following Senators were necessarily absent from today's vote—the Senator from Colorado (Mr. CAMPBELL), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER), and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU).

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. EDWARDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLLINGS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. MILLER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 17, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 211 Leg.]

YEAS—69

Alexander	Dole	McConnell
Allard	Domenici	Mikulski
Allen	Ensign	Murkowski
Baucus	Enzi	Murray
Bayh	Feingold	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Fitzgerald	Nelson (NE)
Bingaman	Frist	Nickles
Bond	Graham (SC)	Pryor
Breaux	Grassley	Reid
Brownback	Hagel	Roberts
Bunning	Harkin	Santorum
Burns	Hatch	Schumer
Cantwell	Hutchison	Sessions
Chafee	Inhofe	Shelby
Clinton	Inouye	Smith
Cochran	Jeffords	Snowe
Coleman	Johnson	Stabenow
Conrad	Kyl	Stevens
Cornyn	Landrieu	Talent
Craig	Lieberman	Thomas
Crapo	Lincoln	Voinovich
Daschle	Lott	Warner
Dayton	Lugar	Wyden

NAYS—17

Akaka	Corzine	Kennedy
Biden	DeWine	Levin
Boxer	Dodd	Reed
Byrd	Durbin	Rockefeller
Carper	Feinstein	Sarbanes
Collins	Gregg	

ANSWERED "PRESENT"—1

Kohl

NOT VOTING—13

Campbell	Hollings	Miller
Chambliss	Kerry	Specter
Dorgan	Lautenberg	Sununu
Edwards	Leahy	
Graham (FL)	McCain	

The conference report was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, there are a few of us who would like to be heard on different subject matters. Maybe we could work out some arrangement so we don't have to wait around. I have about 20 minutes to speak on the bill that was just agreed to. I know other colleagues will also request time on various matters.

I will ask unanimous consent that once matters of business are finished, I be recognized for 15 minutes in morning business.

GUARDSMEN AND RESERVISTS FINANCIAL RELIEF ACT OF 2004

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Finance Committee is discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1779, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of the amendment at the desk, which is agreed to, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table, the bill, as amended, is read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The amendment (No. 4061) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The bill (H.R. 1779), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS FOR MUNICIPALITIES

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of S. Res. 464, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 464) relating to refundable tax credits from municipalities.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the resolution is agreed to and the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The resolution (S. Res. 464) was agreed to.

The resolution reads as follows:

S. RES. 464

Whereas, the Senate today passed a free standing measure which is designed to address tax relief issues relating to Reservists and National Guardsmen;

Whereas, one of the provisions of the package provides tax relief to employers of Reservists and National Guardsmen;

Whereas, the employer provision is targeted to businesses and tax paying entities;

Whereas, State and local governments are facing budgetary pressures, particularly with regard to homeland security;

Whereas, many local first responders have been called to active duty in the National Guards and Reserves, and many state and local governments have continued to pay their salaries, thus increasing the budgetary pressure on state and local governments;

Whereas, the Senate recognized this pressure by including in the FSC-ETI bill a provision to compensate state and local governments for closing the pay gap of first responders who are called to active duty in the National Guards and Reserves: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the Sense of the Senate that:

1. The Senate should reiterate its support for reimbursing state and local governments for closing the pay gap for first responders who are called to active duty in the National Guard and Reserves by considering expanding the employer tax relief provisions to cover state and local governments; and

2. The President should consider including such a proposal in his Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Submission.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, is to be recognized for 30 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I yield the time.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2005—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany H.R. 4837, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for fiscal year ending September 30, 2005.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, and I have 5 minutes to speak on the military construction bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. REID. Reserving the right to object, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Connecticut be recognized following the disposition of the business the Chair has.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, the Military Construction bill is a very important bill this year. Senator FEINSTEIN, the ranking member, and myself as chairman of the committee wanted to talk about its importance.

This is a bill that focuses on the quality of life for our military personnel and also makes sure they have the family housing and training facilities they need.

In addition to our Military Construction bill, this is the disaster supplemental. This is the bill that was chosen to provide help for hurricane victims in Florida and drought relief for our farmers. Also, the Alaska pipeline that is so important to the economy of our country as well as to the economy of Alaska is in this bill. I am very pleased we were able to produce a bill that encompassed all of these very important items at the close of this very important session.

There is in the military construction conference report \$4.5 billion for active components construction and \$9.45 mil-

lion for Guard and Reserve construction. It is important that we increase the quality of the training facilities for our Guard and Reserve. Senator FEINSTEIN and I made a point of doing that during this conference because we felt the Guard and Reserve is way behind in keeping up with the training facilities they need and for the job we are asking them to do. They certainly deserve it.

We increased funding for military housing and worked with the defense authorization committee to make sure that the privatization cap was lifted—a very important step for the quality of housing for our military personnel.

I am very proud of this bill. I am proud that we are meeting the military construction needs. I am proud we were able to provide for the needs of Florida in their disaster recovery efforts and also the drought that has actually been funded for not only the present drought in certain parts of our country but droughts in the past in Texas and other places where the money has run out.

I am proud of this bill. I thank my ranking member, Senator FEINSTEIN, for her help and valuable assistance in making this happen.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am pleased that the conferees on the fiscal year 2005 Military Construction Appropriations bill have reached agreement, and I would like to say a few words about the bill.

The conference report includes important funding for the reconstruction efforts in States affected by recent hurricanes and assistance for agricultural producers suffering from drought and other natural disasters.

First, let me address the military construction portion of the agreement. While the President's budget request was \$9.55 billion, only 2.5 percent over last year's enacted level, the conference report provides \$10 billion for military construction and family housing programs for fiscal year 2005.

These new facilities are crucial to the well being of our troops, especially at a time when our active and Reserve forces are, along with their families, being asked to make enormous sacrifices for our country.

The conference report also provides \$11.6 billion in disaster assistance, including \$8.8 billion for hurricane-related relief which is designated as emergency spending and \$2.8 billion in assistance for agricultural producers suffering through drought and other natural disasters, which is offset by a cap on spending for the Conservation Security Program.

I think we all recognize the importance of this assistance package, but I am disappointed that the majority insisted on treating emergencies in different part of the Nation unequally.

Drought relief for farmers in the Midwest and across the Nation is no less important than hurricane relief in the Southeast and should not have required an offset from the Conservation Security Program.

Offsetting this funding hobbles the effectiveness of one of the most impor-

tant environmental programs in the Department of Agriculture.

I was also concerned that the package requested by the President leapfrogged Federal Highway Administration assistance for damage done by the hurricanes ahead of the backlog of projects required to repair damage from past disasters.

However, this concern was addressed by an agreement to fully fund the backlogged emergency relief program in the pending omnibus bill.

Chairman HUTCHISON indicated at the conference that Speaker HASTERT and Majority Leader FRIST have committed to fully fund the States that need this assistance, and I appreciate their help on this issue.

There are currently \$752 million in projects that have not been funded, even though they have already qualified for emergency relief.

California alone has over \$240 million in projects that have not been funded. I appreciate Chairman YOUNG's willingness to rectify this situation and look forward to the emergency relief funding program being funded in the omnibus.

The conference agreement also includes Senator STEVENS' provision on the Alaska Natural Gas pipeline.

Senator STEVENS has worked for the past few years to authorize funding for this pipeline, and I am pleased that we could get this done for the senior Senator from Alaska.

The provision authorizes the construction of a pipeline from Prudhoe Bay, AK, to the lower 48, with a dedicated supply of natural gas to California.

The provision provides Federal loan guarantees to whatever entity builds/decides to build the pipeline, as Senator STEVENS requested.

The demand for natural gas in this country is growing exponentially, particularly in my State of California. Natural gas prices have risen dramatically over the past several years, from \$2 per thousand cubic feet in 1998 to over \$7 just this week.

We need more natural gas, and I hope that Senator STEVENS' provision to bring Alaska natural gas down to the lower 48 states and particularly California will help meet that demand.

Mr. President, while I would have preferred to pass the Military Construction bill without the contentious issues surrounding this disaster assistance package, I support this conference report and hope my colleagues will do the same.

Finally, I want to thank Senator HUTCHISON for the manner in which she handled this process. I have long admired her integrity and her leadership in reaching this agreement was outstanding.

Mr. President, this is a good bill. It has had some hiccups along the way. One of them, of course, was the House put in the disaster relief package and had the signatures and would have eventually rolled us in conference.